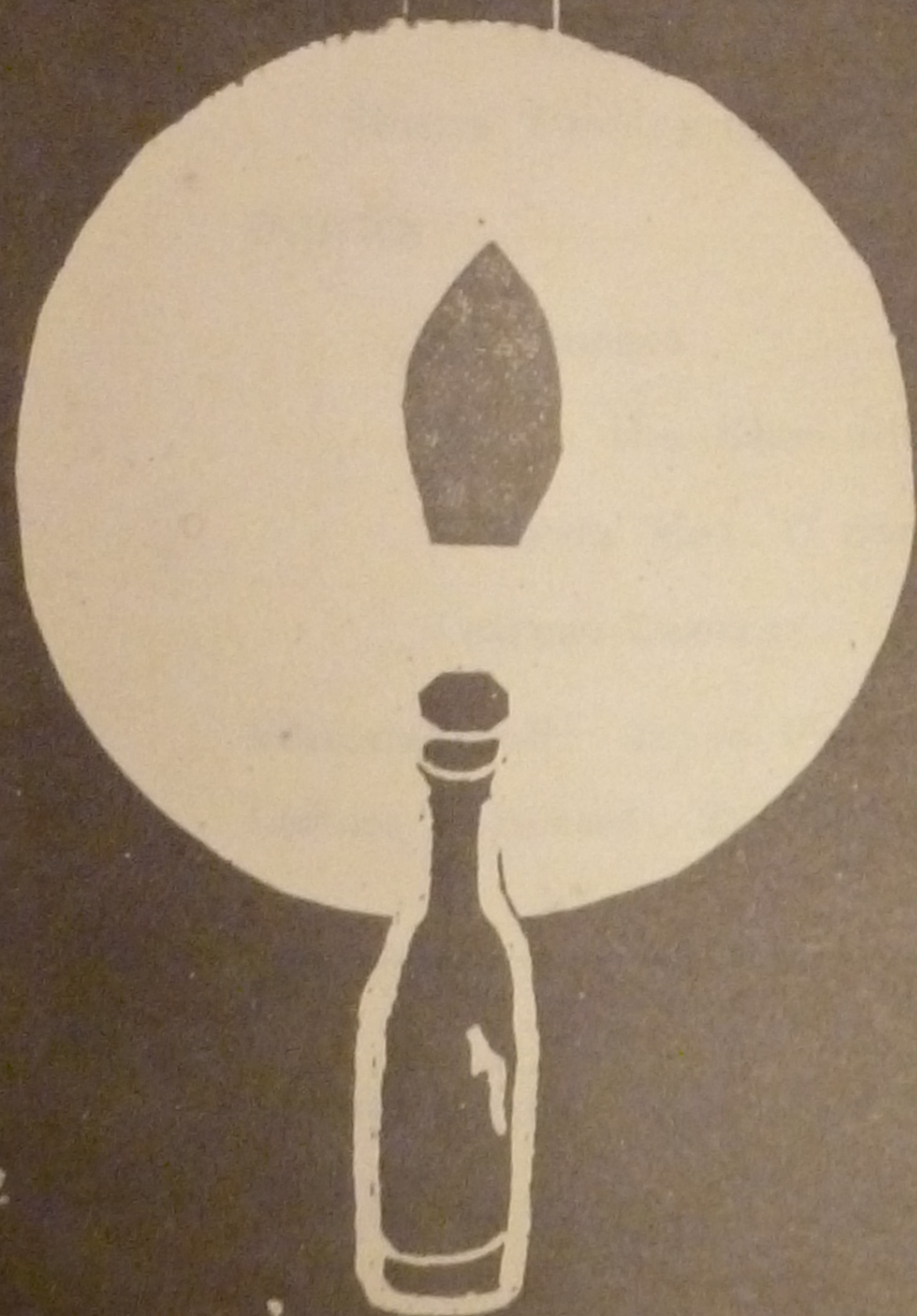


APRIL
1966

FLAMBEAU

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
PUBLISHED BY
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50c.

"FLAMBEAU"

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

"INSTEAD OF CURSING THE DARKNESS ONE LIGHTS A CANDLE."

NO. 4

APRIL, 1966.

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Editorial Staff: Joyce Peters, Daniel Williams, Kenneth John,
Letters addressed: The editor, c/o Extra-Mural Office, Kingstown.

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OF COLOUR OF THINKING AND ST. VINCENT.

By ELIZABETH BROCKMAN.

I speak as a foreigner and I am not black. Like yourself I have not been given a choice. I say this now, in the beginning. I say it first that you will find your excuse for rejecting what I now write, a little less glibly. "She doesn't understand, she's—"

I also speak with empathy. All of us, white and foreign, black and Vincentian, have been rejected, we have been found wanting, without charm by some, by some repulsive. It hurts. It damages our finer instincts, makes us defensive and bitter. Sometimes it hurts less if we can convince ourselves that none of it is our personal, individual lack but "their prejudice". We all want excuses. I do not deny racial problems, not being blind. Prejudice in a man who has been hurt as the Negro has been by the white is understandable. It is not, however, desirable.

St. Vincent needs timely answers and not answers for a problem already disappearing in the West Indies. The time is too critical for flights of poetic but distorted perspective, for the luxury of false flights and false excuse. This is not the time for supplying the populace with soft rationalizations. Racial prejudice is not all or even most of St. Vincent's problem. Slavery is not now.

St. Vincent has problems. The unfortunate English class system does exist, race is involved. But St. Vincent's problems are not unique to Negro, ex-slave populations. Even in St. Vincent they are not problems unique to the Negro population. There is, is there not, the poor white Bajan, non-slave and non-black and suffering?

Other nations and other races share the social ills of St. Vincent and are willing to share their solutions. Are not answers better than lamentations? A quote from Flambeau page 5, "Negro slavery its effect on the black man in St. Vincent is everlasting. He has had to toil in serfdom for so many years that labour now holds little virtue—and all over the island the poverty stricken black man has grown lazy, dishonest, and criminally bent".

All because of slavery? All because of blackness? What of the lazy dishonest, criminally bent white man, non-slave, non-black, living in white poverty? And what of the white ex-slaves who have found solutions? Even the blight of slavery has plagued other nations and other races. Furthermore, the white race has enslaved people of the white race and the black man in Africa has bought and sold the black man. I have seen the small room with its eye slit where the African tribal chiefs

stood to sell the natives of other African tribes. I have known the African ex-slaves of African masters and I have known their African masters, all old now, who lived in a different time in history. True part of the difference lies in the magnitude of the 18th century slave trade. Yet you won't hear the man with a memory in Africa complaining about slavery without remembering to forgive or excuse his grandfather. In Africa slavery is rarely if ever thought of except as a thing of the past and is never used as an excuse for individual lacks or social problems except by the politicians.

If, suddenly, everyone in St. Vincent were to turn black or if the Government were to be run by only the darkest negroes, would St. Vincent's economic, political, social problems—the true problems—be solved? No. One has the feeling that Mr. "Wilwright" wants not a world of all races but a world of a dark black race, or at the very least the coloured races. Surely his thinking is as outworn, as unreal, as wrong as the white man who wants the world white. Perhaps his pseudonym should ideally become "Mr. Won't Wrong."

One can waste valuable time and poetic breath, to say nothing of the printer's ink, with such flamboyant statements as, "Despite the universal negro-extirpation drive, the black man continues to exist."

Such an inflammatory statement is dangerous not merely to the white races of the world but to all races, more particularly to a small island if caught up and burned out by hate. And dangerous to the individual himself, yourself, myself. One can cruelly mislead, prescribe a catharsis when an immediate remedy is needed or, worse, yet, arouse the anger that paralyses if not destroys. Anyway there is no constructive action. In this way the efforts of the young boys particularly can be wasted.

What is past is past. What is very much present needs answers in the present, not excuses from the past. While one is engrossed in the pleasure of festering one's wound and the enjoyment of calling the cruel dead grandfather foul names, gangrene can set in.

Let us look at the present, agree that there is a vestige of racial prejudice remaining but disappearing in St. Vincent and a great deal of racial prejudice practised in other countries. Then let us mention the signs of progress that Mr. Wilwright has glossed over. Finally let us remind ourselves of the promise ahead here in St. Vincent. Government. Let it suffice to mention that the majority of the population happens to be coloured and that the permanent

secretaries are and that the majority of the civil service is coloured.

Commerce. In other West Indian Islands there are important black business men, even in islands as close as St. Lucia and Grenada. There are important coloured business men. A question, has the small Vincentian negro business man trained himself? Truly he is at a disadvantage in not having been born into a married economy — though he is more fortunate than his fellow Islanders in not having to compete with Asiatics who have been born into a married economy. That is the past as it has been the past on other West Indian Islands. Has he adopted a formal system, recorded so that he can review, criticize and pass on to son or successor his proven successful methods? Another question, does the average small business man do what clever Mr. Basil Balcombe, has done? Does he repay his bank loans? Does he re-invest into his business rather than spend on white "prestige symbols"? Or does he trust too much in imitating a race he has falsely been taught is superior rather than equal.

We need not to pass for white or to pass for black — we share a great need to become colourless in our thinking, that is to say to be without prejudice before we can become what black literally is, all colours together.

What of the Estates? Uncle Balcombe bought his — was not given, did not take, but bought. What ever way Mr. Wilwright gets his estate I hope he gives it to me soon.

What of today and the future? Suppose a young, vigorous group of intelligent boys of all races, and all social classes guided by an experienced well educated group of all races and classes, such as Flambeau should be — including a reasonable man of the plantocracy — were to form a positive policy, a strongly written policy that no one can call false names. At a meeting they might draw up a simple list of problems in conjunction with practical solutions (other than the solution of a panel of indisputably black prejudiced judges to choose an indisputably black Carnival Queen.) Page 4. Included would be a list of local and foreign organization of aid.

In the meantime, why not a little self-help for existing problems. Surely strong boys can build a playing field for example, or housing for the young and the young delinquents, the future citizens. One needs ideals and ideas, but one should question the value of invisible solutions, once one has found one's identity of talk on bridges while tomorrow's generation grows older on the streets.

What of answering these immediate needs while simultaneously encouraging the government in its formulation of a policy of social services and the formulation of a policy for the solution of the true problems. I question Mr. Wilwright's solution to righting the world. I

suspect he wants to widen the rift rather than bridge it. There is nothing wrong with a coloured skin. There is a great deal wrong with "coloured thinking", biased thinking, whether it comes from a man coloured black or coloured white.

ALPHONSO ROBERTS WRITES FROM CANADA.

I have been inflicted with a final exam, in a course tomorrow, but nevertheless take a brief respite to write. I am at Carleton University. At this stage I do not have any profound enthusiasm for the institutional and stereotyped academic pursuits which I have followed for the past three years, and now in a fourth. I am using this fourth year to extend my knowledge a bit on courses I did not do earlier, and after this I am probably quitting, unless something lucrative and inspiring turns up.

I have come to the considered conclusion that the reaching out for higher academic achievements may be useful in itself, but that it seems to be more motivated by the academic race — rat race that has enveloped Western, especially North American society. No wonder they had the explosion at Berkeley at the University of California. I would however exhort anyone to get the highest achievements they can, but for me this rat race is too much and demanding. I want to be able to do things when I wish; my way, at my own leisure and to my satisfaction, and selflessly at that.

The magazine has been tremendous. I believe I realise the headaches and problems that must confront one in such an undertaking, and am fully sympathetic to the whole effort. Getting together a group of people (and even after this, with the bulk of the work falling on a very small few) is infinitely rough; but getting out something like "Flambeau" is indeed a great step forward and needs to be supported.

I am looking forward to returning home. I do not see myself as having any great role to play. Temperamentally and otherwise, I believe, I am disinclined to public life. I prefer doing things as unobtrusively as possible and contributing where I can and in any little way. I have certain ideas and beliefs, as we all have, but I don't purport to have solutions and answers to our problems. No one man can have. So that the young people at home must stop looking for Messiahs from Universities, and instead look in among themselves where they will find to their individual and collective astonishment that the Messiahs will and must be found in Organisations, Unity, Selflessness and a willingness to question the status quo, and

hence draw on the necessary conclusions. I do not want to claim laurels for myself, but I think I have always been a die-hard patriot in a quiet way, and uncompromising in my attitude to certain ways of thinking which I feel will keep us this time not in chains, but in mental servitude. I am not afraid of labels or whether people feel disgusted at labels which have been proscribed for me. Everyone has the right to agree or disagree. And so have I. The only thing is that after all the disgust is manifested, we all remain sunk in poverty and degradation. So that the problem facing us will not be solved by invective, abuse, vituperation, or by the use of correct grammar or not, or by being able to call to mind correct historical dates etc., and being just a nice fellow, but only by a cool, clear, calm and calculating analysis of our present situation and the remedies that this situation necessitates, and taking into account that the life of man is paramount. I have always been an optimist in a pessimistic way. Why? I feel St. Vincent can offer a living to its 80 odd thousand people, but that the problems to be remedied will be so great that I cannot see these being completely or even partially rectified not even in my life time, especially if we continue at the present rate.

Incidentally, I have just been glancing at the proposal for Associateship; Kenneth, if we only accept these as they are we will be binding our children and their children for the rest of their lives. I am completely apposed to some of these proposals, e.g. the Amendment procedure needs a thorough going over; and, too, a hard look has to be taken at the basic clauses e.g. in Section 12 (a) the position of Her Majesty and her Representative. This seems to me to be an attempt to make it as difficult as possible to remove the Queen or King as head and replace him or her by a Republican head. Another thing worth looking at is (h) dealing with the responsibility and power of the British authorities and (I) the procedure for alteration of the Constitution by the legislature of the territory. And too, (e) of the same section 12.

Another thing needing clarification in Sec. 14 re Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, is especially sub-sec (e) — "protection from deprivation of property." This needs clarification; for if property as it is loosely designated here gives man or a few men the power to subjugate the labour of others through a pyramidal heaping up or appropriation of property, then obviously this type of property cannot be said to be a fundamental right and freedom. Hence this must be clarified. The "commanding heights of the economy of the country must accrue to the state." No man, however, should be deprived of the power to appropriate the products of society, and which appropriation must not subjugate others. Hence, the right to personal property e.g. savings, a dwelling

'MY ST. VINCENT'

By BOBBY FRASER.

An Emerald
dropped in the Caribbean
Sparkling.
In all its misery
St. Vincent
My home, my loving home.

High green mountains,
Porraceous fertile valleys
Grand setting for prosperity generating
poverty.

Black sand, fishing boats, fish nets,
White sand, crystal clear water and people —
St. Vincent.

Trash houses,
Strong, robust men, idling under trees.
Women,
hoe in hand, and basket on head.
Children,
water-eyed, hungry, fingers in mouths.
Women,
Tight skirt, well dressed, happy.
Children,
Joyful, jovial, loving, happy
Holding on to mothers' dress, tagging along
Through green fertile valleys.
St. Vincent
Land of the Blessed.

house and household articles and others for personal use as well as the right of inheritance should all be preserved.

Freedom of Movement should be clarified and held to mean freedom also of travel in and out of the colony.

Section 17 dealing with the judiciary should be questioned. The Parliament, I feel, should be the supreme law-making body, and the Superior Court here has too much power e.g. "the court will have power to issue to any person or authority any orders or directions which it considers necessary to ensure that the Constitution is complied with and to enforce those orders and directions. The Representative of the British Government will have the right to initiate proceedings in the court to determine whether any law or any executive act is inconsistent with the Constitution." Kenneth, if we accept this and the rest, no one with good intentions can bring progress to St. Vincent. This much is clear to me. The British Labour Party which claims itself to be Socialist, is proving itself one of the most reactionary governments that Britain has had. In its colonial relations it has been worse than any Tory administration. I'm not a racist, but it seems quite clear that there can be no solidarity

of an international proletarian nature between the peoples of the North and South. This international proletarianism is a suspect thing, and I wonder if ever this can be realised. I doubt it. I support it in principle, but every man whether black, white, pink or yellow is always in the long run for his own national interests.

These proposals are very much humiliating. They manipulated the Federal Constitution for Nigeria. This has now been sprung by armed action. Then these same people tell you in the West that you must never use force. But if one is strait-jacketed like the people in Nigeria were, then the patriotic elements will resort to force. Force will not be used in St. Vincent, for we seem to be a peaceful people except when dealing with one another, so I do not suppose that these humiliating proposals will evoke a militant constitutional struggle. These proposals will yoke us like oxen, and future elected members will have more responsibility with less political power. So that when people ask for bread they will only get stones.

Kenneth, don't let us fool ourselves. The British Government is not prepared to see any progressive people come to power in these islands. As it is stated in Sec. 10 (b) "It will be understood that there will be no obligation on the British Parliament or Her Majesty in Council to comply with a request from the territory to alter its Constitution." Further on in Sec. 18: "Apart from making constitutional alterations to terminate the association, neither Britain nor the territory will be able to change the relationship (e.g. by modifying the responsibilities or powers of Britain) without the consent of the other party; arrangements will be made for this purpose." But what are the responsibility and powers of the British Government? Sec. 24 tells us:

"Responsibility will include the fulfilment and protection of Britain's Commonwealth and international obligations and interests."

All I see here are the interests of Britain; nothing of our interests. Chapter XI of the UN Charter entitled "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories" states that the members in this case Britain, are responsible for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government and must recognize that the interests of the inhabitants are paramount. And to this end they undertake to develop self government and taking into account the political aspirations of the peoples (to be free) and to assist them in the development (not limitation) of their free (unfettered) political institutions.

But what do we see as the "sacred trust" and "the obligation to promote, their well being to the utmost." All we see as respect for

our peoples culture and their political, economic, social and educational advancement, is that in Sec. 24:

"The British Parliament will have the necessary executive authority in the territory." Britain's Legislative powers over her external and defence affairs responsibilities will extend to St. Vincent: to the making of any provisions (including provisions relating to any matter in the field of internal government) which appear to Parliament or Her Majesty in Council necessary to prevent circumstances arising or continuing in the territory that may prejudice the discharge of Britain's responsibilities. Such legislation will prevail over any law in force in the territory and may confer functions on any officer or authorities of the Government as well as upon other persons or authorities. Who will be these "other persons" I am sorry to bore you with all this, but was trying to impress upon you that a great and militant and wide discussion should be held on these proposals and that these opprobrious clauses must be deleted, otherwise we are hamstrung for life, and all our efforts will be in vain.

Our interests must be paramount and we who have seen people walking barefooted in ragged clothes, without work, made destitute and degraded by existing conditions, we must reject these proposals. You can publish this if you like, and however you like. We must not be fettered and limited in any way, so that we take all necessary means to have our economy developed and to lift our people up. Under present circumstances this will never be done, and more so if these proposals are accepted. For Britain is interested only in peace, Order and Good Government. I am for an independence that must be untrammelled. I accept in principle the need for full and decisive internal self-government with the full political power that this should entail and with the supremacy of the legislature guaranteed. The Courts may have the power to determine whether certain laws are Ultra Vires, but not above the legislature. The British representative must have no say in our affairs, and not "have the right to initiate proceedings in the court to determine whether any law or any executive act is inconsistent with the Constitution." This is in Sec. 17. Further this is not right since the Superior Court will have a President appointed by the Lord Chancellor in England. To even concede the point that a Court is needed, why couldn't there be West Indian judges favourable to West Indian ideals, and interest?

Also there should be a demand for a Lt. Governor from St. Vincent and from no other island, since a man from another island is more apt to work hand in glove with the British Government, whereas a local Governor will be under constant scrutiny of his own populace and

the elected representatives of that populace.

I also draw your attention to Greenwood's letter to the Administrator, and quite smartly in para. (5) urging the government not to study the whole set of proposals carefully, but instead to study the least restrictive and innocuous proposals:

"Your Government's proposals should in particular deal with the matters referred to in the memorandum in paragraphs 3 & 4 (the Queen's representative), 7 (the legislative Chambers), 16 (the executive), 20 (the Civil Service), 22 (financial procedure) and 26 (control of criminal prosecutions and the power of pardon)."

You see the typical disarming British way of doing things and utilizing the gentle art of persuasion. So that the administrator, the mouth-piece of the Secretary of State, in initiating discussions of these proposals will now push these rather straight-forward proposals to the fore and hence endeavouring to preclude meaningful deliberations on the really restrictive and not-in-our-interest proposals in Sec. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 (re the country's contribution, financial that is, of the upkeep of the superior supreme court) 24, 25. You can discuss the content of this letter with anyone, and you can publish it as a letter-to-the-Editor column of "Flambeau." If I find the time I will write something to the local press, but this depends on time. I was also preparing an article for the magazine, but time again, and it is long.

I hope you have received the books I sent. These are completely without any strings attached, I am not interested in converting any one; never was, and never will attempt it; nor do I have the wherewithal to do this. I send these publications so that one can read and appraise what's going on in the world, and so be in a position to avoid the errors of others and to appreciate their efforts. For while we say Nkrumah is this and Castro is that the fact is that in St. Vincent more babies are born, and more die, while jobs do not open up but decrease. We in the small islands indulge in too much name-calling. We can see what is wrong with every other people, but not what is wrong with us. In the meantime the other countries we will fight against if called upon to do so move on, trying to bring their long down-trodden people into the 20th Century. We in St. Vincent turn in on one another, character assassinate one another, preside over one another's destinies, deciding who is good and not good, who is bright and not bright, who is communist and who is not, and after this inglorious free-for-all, we all lapse deeper into degradation and subjectivity and then when we come face to face with ourselves, make frantic efforts to leave the island, like rats trying to escape from a poison-

infested hole. When will we learn? No wonder some of us decide to lead quiet lives, attend to our families, and let every thing collapse around us. Sometimes I feel just this way, for we are all so powerless.

HIS IS THE EBON FIBRE

As tall against the sky he stood
His negro hair was capped with dew
And the dark concoction in his skin
Trapped the energy in the morning sun.

And yet he does not know
That his is the ebon fibre
That lit the furnace of the sun
Before the white gyrations of the snow.

They taught him unknown tongues
Before he knew the double edge of language
Before he found his strong black God
They gave him alien gods to worship.

They taught him how to pray
Before they gave him books to read
They raped the metal centre of his land
And left him with the eucharist on the altar.

Yet man shall not live by bread alone,
Nor will the genuflecting knee alone
Make strong the peasants' wilted bone.

If in his flushed lips he sees his God
Out of the convex mirror his own image
Then will he find Golgotha, a stone's throw
Behind his shanty town!

His negro head was bright against
The polished sun that haloed him a light
At last he saw his Christ his black
His burnished body drenched in equatorial heat
Beyond the white commotion of the snow
His negro hand outstretched.

DANIEL WILLIAMS.

EDITORIAL LETTER

We publish above two letters sent in to us by readers of "Flambeau." The first, radical in tone, is mainly concerned with the new constitutional proposals and the political future of St. Vincent. We have little comment to make on this letter save, perhaps, to say that 'Phonso' is misinformed if he believes that his fellow-Vincentians are so politically alive as to seriously discuss the issues of the day, let alone display a self-confidence which demands a complete severance from the British connexion. The hue and cry are that we are not ready for self-rule and should hold on as long as we could to the British Crown. The second letter has been the most balanced and constructive reaction that was sparked off by Wilwright's controversial article "Of Colour of skin and St. Vincent."

There were other replies to Wilwright, but they did not amount to much. "Laertes" wrote in the local press what was little more than a thinly-veiled personal attack on the integrity of our editor, so we mention this only in passing. One Savio Lee also wrote a criticism that was both alarmist and ignorant and we reproduce some excerpts from it. By way of introduction Lee calls the "Flambeau" group "a bigoted bunch of blundering block-heads. A menace to society with their revolutionary agitations and biased assessments of the financial control of the island. They are instigating revolutions, riots and conflagrations and as such could be guilty of felonies." Obviously this is evidence of woolly thinking and barbed personal attack which is irrelevant to the issue and only betrays the intellectual dishonesty and moral bankruptcy of the author. One is at a loss to know from where Lee drew his conclusions about riots and the like. Lee refers to Wilwright's article as "a most bigoted attack on the white race, who has equal and even more right to be here in St. Vincent, than any Negro. The only native of this island, the Caribs and Arawaks are today non-existent. So we are all impostors. This article spoke of the control of the money in the island by the Whites, (but it must not be forgotten that these people, whether through grants or otherwise earned their lands), and foreign investment is owned by the white man. It was not a case of stealing or defrauding the Negro. The white man was in St. Vincent long before the Negro arrived, and he (the Negro) arrived as a slave, not as a free man. He owned nothing before 1834, therefore he must be contented with what he has." Last Lee has said something for us to hold

on to. Is he now rationalizing the financial status quo which he earlier called a biased assessment? Do the Carib descendants "non-exist" in Sandy Bay? Were not the Black Caribs cheated of their lands? Is not the Black exploitation of slave labour a clear case of fraud and theft? Is it not an historical fact that the Black Caribs were well established here before the full rude blast of White incursion? Oh, no Mr. Lee, the negroes will not be contented with what they have, nor will you intimidate Wilwright whose exposé disturbed you so much.

And now a word on the second letter. Elizabeth may be right, but blandly stating that the race question is disappearing in St. Vincent does not make it so. With what has she compared the present situation? From the outset she merely assumes away the problem which she set out to prove. "Slavery is not now." Agreed. But its effects are. We, however, believe with Elizabeth that Wilwright might have been guilty of a dangerous oversimplification if not gross exaggeration when he attributed almost every negro ill to slavery and when he referred to a "universal negro extermination drive." The position of the Dorsetshire Hill "Poor White", however, seems a minor exception which can disturb the thesis of Wilwright's theme only at the periphery. Elizabeth needs to know that there is slavery and slavery. Negro slavery was unique. It had racial overtones. It involved physical transplantation. It involved the deracination of a people and their acculturation to a foreign way of life. And it left a rootless race cut adrift from their emotional moorings to be found in a historical tradition and cultural past. Elizabeth goes on to pose a very interesting question. "Has the small Vincentian negro businessman trained him-self Has he adopted a formal system, recorded that he can review, criticize and pass on to son or successor his proven successful methods"? The answer is of course No. No is also the answer if the question were to be addressed to the big Vincentian White business man. So what? We are sorry to have to fight shy of discussing the rise of Mr. Balcombe for the obvious reason that he is still living. We ask to be taken on trust that however much we may admire "clever Mr. Balcombe" his case is a typical and not likely to be easily modelled in the present dispensation. And why, one wonders, does Elizabeth find it necessary to advocate the special inclusion of a "reasonable man of the plantocracy" in our group? Not a lawyer, doctor, agriculturist, economist, social

O SAVIO ME! O SAVIO LEE!

BY CAMERON KING.

"Agitate agitate, reform, reform,
Down with society, down with the norm,"
'For God's sake, No!' - this from Lee,
'Save the rotten gang, O Savio mee!'

Should not ripe fruit which rots fall down,
Tumbling sceptre, ball and crown?
Why this inflated fuss, Lee,
This Savio, Savio, Savio me?

'The Flambeau burns, why shouldn't it burn?'
'Oh? should it burn when all its pages turn
And smoke with biased bias,
Upsetting Lee and all the pious pious?'

As instance take each lousy verse,
Preaching negritude and worse,
Fools! in Colour's skin lies not the might,
Brains by any colour shine just as white.

Martin Luther King, that boy quite rightly said
Excellence must put the negro man ahead,
Culture, learning, even street cleaning,
Unfawning firmness and right dealing.

So Lee, you have your little point,
Though grossly twisted out of joint,
Give thanks to this editorial kingdom
Which in much rot finds microscopic wisdom.

And weakly magnifies in notes on slavery?
Too gentle, K, too gentle is the irony,
Elites must have it rammed right through
their collars,
Leave innuendo for perceptive scholars.

'Down,' say the boys, 'with false society,'
'Down with the boys,' says weak-bladdered Lee,
Shall we abolish both? Start from scratch?
See from such potential what we can snatch?

Yes, send all to Martin Luther School,
Educate all bastard sons, let reason rule,
Keep political pants well tied up,
And let the past slobber in its dirty cup.

worker or cleric; but especially a plantocrat! Again Wilwright might have erred in his call for undisputedly black carnival queens and the like but it seems more than accident that St. Vincent has never boasted a real darkie Queen. For all that we still very much appreciate Elizabeth's letter for it is an honest attempt to meet the problems head-on with little fanfare. Our group wishes to make a contribution to St. Vincent by stirring up public debates on controversial issues, by challenging the basis of

constituted authority, and by questioning entrenched dogma. We welcome criticism if it is not the abusive sort which darkens the issues involved in a cloud of irrelevancies. We find accommodation for suggestions which are not cluttered by arrogance nor which impute motives. For our objective is not to inflame passions or exploit prejudices but simply to expose the status quo to a scorching analysis. And it does not matter much if we sometimes commit honest mistakes in our quest after Truth, because we are convinced that if a man is not free to go wrong he can never go right. So we will continue to express fearlessly our independent thoughts and to provide a medium of communication for reasoned nonconformist thinking; this business of life is too important and complex for its tempo to be dictated by closed minds and wooden heads.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ST. VINCENT.

By WALLACE DEAR

Proposals for a new Constitution granting full internal self-government to St. Vincent, and offering a special association with Great Britain, were issued towards the end of last year. This paper seeks to sketch the constitutional background, and to travel quickly along the long road to the present proposals. An apology I owe is for taking the liberty of proposing to devote more time and attention to the earlier periods of constitutional change. The reason is that most of us are more acquainted with the history of our more recent past. In fact some of you know it better than I do.

The constitutional history of St. Vincent is essentially the constitutional history of the Windwards, so don't be too disturbed if I sometimes speak generally. The chief reason for this is the unavailability of sufficient data on the territory. However I can promise that such references will not be many.

St. Vincent's history begins with its discovery by a Genoese navigator, Christopher Columbus who claimed the island in the name of the King of Spain towards the close of the 15th Century. The Caribs who were the natives remained in undisturbed possession until 1627 when the king of England assuming ownership of the island granted it to the Earl of Carlisle. Attempts to establish English settlements met with stern opposition from the Caribs supported by the French who rivalled the English in this area. Indeed this rivalry, characterised by naval battles in the area, lasted for quite a long time during which ownership of the island

changed hands on many occasions. It was not until the Treaty of Paris in 1763 that the island was ceded to the British, and constitutional government was formally introduced.

Constitution:

On 7th October, 1763 the formal change-over took place. General Melville was appointed Governor. There was a Royal Proclamation to the effect that the king, George III, had bestowed on St. Vincent a constitution by which the first organized Government was set up with a Council and an Assembly of representatives of the people. Here we had the classic constitution patterned off the British model. It was composed of three estates, the head of which was the Governor representing the king. There was an Upper House known as the Council (the counterparts of the Lords) but, as there was no nobility in the island, its members consisted of those nominated by the Governor. Then there was the Lower House, called the House of Assembly, elected by the freeholders of the Colony. Each of the three estates had the same powers and functions of its counterpart in the British system.

What was the constitution of the Assembly like, and what were the relevant qualifications? In 1766 an Act was passed by Parliament stipulating that the Assembly should consist of 12 elected members, 3 for each of the 5 main-land parishes constituencies, 2 for Kingstown, and 2 for the Grenadines. The Council or Upper House varied in size from island to island; but consisted of 9 members on the average. The qualifications to be a member of the parish were 50 acres of land under cultivation or producing an annual income £300. The qualification for an elector was a freehold of 10 acres, or a house in Kingstown of £20 yearly rental value, or £16 in other parts of the colony. Such an arrangement ensured that elected members could only be drawn from the plantocracy, the large estate owner, and the high qualifications necessary to be an elector, and ours were the highest in the Windwards, limited the size of the electorate to only the white population. This section of population increased with an influx of settlers mainly English, Irish & Scots, which was simultaneous with the introduction of British rule. Of a total population at the time of some 12,000 there were only 1,500 white settlers. This meant roughly that about 12% of the population had the right to vote.

There are two aspects to this. This was the peak period of slave labour, for slaves were being brought in large numbers to work on estates. Some argue that in fact there was representative rule in the colony at this time because the masters who owned and represented the slaves were enfranchised. Such an

argument, however, even if accepted at that time would be without foundation once the slaves were emancipated. On the other hand if the assembly was composed of "representatives of the people" then there was over 80% of the population who was not accepted as people. It is not surprising that the situation arose in which unfair treatment of the unrepresented population, viewed as a possibility, became a fact. And in the view of Mr. Ebenezer Duncan, St. Vincent's authority in local history, "it is not too much to assume that the possibility was that if the Caribs were allowed representation in the legislature, there might not have been any conflict of the magnitude of the Carib War at the time of its occurrence" (at the close of the 18th Century).

How did the constitution operate in practice? The Executive authority was vested in the Governor who remained completely independent of the Assembly. The elected members therefore could not participate in the functions of making decisions and formulating policies. The Council, consisting of nominated members, did perform executive functions, but it acted purely in an advisory capacity i.e. the Governor was not bound to accept or act on its advice. In addition, being nominated, members owed no responsibility to the Assembly. The Assembly however had total powers over finance. The result was that the Government consisted of a Governor with unqualified executive powers, and an Assembly with unqualified powers over finance—with no machinery, nor no principle for solving the conflicts between them. There were conflicts over decisions, and methods to be employed to raise revenue. All assemblies in the area having the power to thwart the wishes of the Executive, (and this they did often) gained the reputation of being quarrelsome, factious, and obstructive. In Grenada, Civil Servants had to go for 6 months without salary while the Assembly and Council carried on a long quarrel. The formation of an Executive Council consisting of members of the Assembly and Council to assist in the general administration of finance, failed to resolve irreconcilable differences, since the Governor's executive powers remained untouched.

In St. Vincent in 1849 the Assembly had to be dissolved as a result of failure to get a quorum of members to attend meetings after repeated adjournments. In addition a growing body of opinion in England was strongly opposed to representative institutions in the West Indies, because of their record of resistance and obstruction of the emancipated slaves. The policy of Colonial Office was now to reduce the islands to Crown Colony Status. The first opportunity to implement this policy came in Jamaica after the Morant uprising in 1865; St. Vincent lost its Constitution in 1877.

Crown Colony:

The imposition of Crown Colony rule was not easily enforced owing to the emergence of recently emancipated slaves who were now clamouring for representation. These were to a large extent exhorted by the French who were already exposed to the familiar slogans and writings of the French Revolution. Provisions were now made for a Legislative Council consisting of 3 official and 2 unofficial members, presided over by the Governor. Crown Colony Government was ruled by the Crown through the Secretary of State. The Governor was obliged to obey his instructions whether in his legislative or executive capacity, and whether in accordance with his personal views or not. Official members were in a similar position. The system of Crown Colony Government was truly devised to protect the underprivileged masses who were as yet ignorant of the influence of the ballot box. Its objective was to retain full scope to the Crown to measure up to the responsibility it has assumed, to deal with all fairly and justly. But it failed. It failed because the officials owed no responsibility to the electorate of people it served. It failed because to maintain itself it did not have to satisfy popular interests or to win popular support.

This dissatisfaction was fomented by the return of those who had served abroad in World War I and who were now imbued with the desire to preserve and extend freedom and liberty. Underlying both these were the results of a more "widespread" education in which the ex-slaves shared. They were all agitating for a greater measure of representation, which culminated in the signing of a Petition which was submitted to the king, praying for a change from Crown Colony Government. As a result Colonial Office despatched a commission in 1924 under Edward Wood, Parliamentary Under Secretary of state for the Colonies, and Ormsby Gore, to consider inter alia representative Government, Primary Education, Federation and Economy of Administration. In his report Wood recommended a semi-representative constitution for the Windwards, a Legislature with ex-officio members equal to the number of unofficial and elected members. The Governor retained absolute executive control even though in his executive functions he was advised by Council consisting of the chief officials of Government, nominated official and 2 prominent members of the community. Although this measure was only half a loaf, it was received with much acclamation.

Further agitation both in the Legislative Council and at public meetings attracted attention at Downing Street and a new constitution was granted in 1936. There were now 2 official members, 3 nominated members and 5 elected

members in Legislative Council. We may note in passing that of the elected members, 4 belonged to the labour party operating under the auspices of the Workingmen's Association. Such a constitution did not encourage the emergence of a party, for in any case they would have had to obtain the support of nominated members to get a majority, and this was unlikely. Thus they could only resort to criticizing and opposing the Government. These two changes were progressive to the extent that elected members as a percentage of the whole Legislative Council had increased, but they remained as ineffective as before. The executive functions and powers of the Administrator were still unfettered. In terms of effectiveness therefore little had been achieved by these changes; the ex-slaves were now represented, the composition of Legislative Council showed some change; but a great percentage of the population was still excluded from the right to cast a vote.

Throughout the Caribbean in the mid-thirties there were labour disturbances resulting in riots and uprisings. There is no doubt that economic hardships contributed much to these; but is probable that added to those hardships were the dissatisfaction and frustration which had been the experience of a large unrepresented section of the population. A royal Commission under Lord Moyne was appointed to enquire into the social and economic conditions of the area. They found that beneath the discontent of which the disturbances were an expression, lay social and economic ills which called for urgent remedy. The Commission found an excessive demand for full representative government. This is how the Commission saw it: — "We are satisfied that the claims so often put before us that the people should have a larger voice in the management of their own affairs represents a genuine sentiment, and reflect the growing political consciousness which is sufficiently widespread to make it doubtful whether any schemes of social reform, however wisely conceived and efficiently conducted, would be completely successful unless they were accompanied by the largest measure of constitutional development which is thought judicious in the existing circumstances." The diagnosis was very correct; the remedy was rather startling. The Commission later on in their report went to pains to explain what they meant by "judicious in existing circumstances". It was this. Any fundamental change contemplated must ensure that the Legislative and Executive Councils do not play a more significant role in the public affairs of the Colonies. This was all the more startling because they had spotted that the inherent weakness lay in the opposition of one towards the other. The initiative for formulating policy should therefore remain with the Governor in Council. The recommendations

were never implemented until after the war, and the time-lag pointedly emphasized the need for further democratisation.

Four major constitutional reforms were introduced. Firstly, Universal Adult Suffrage was introduced. Formerly the qualifications limiting electors were either ownership of property, or annual income, or payment of taxes, in each case a minimum value being set. Secondly, qualifications for memberships of Legislative Council was reduced. These used to be ownership of property to the value of £500, or an annual income of £200. Instead the stipulation was that the person be a British subject, 21 years of age, resident in the Colony and possessing a sufficient proficiency in reading and speaking the English language to be able to participate in the affairs of the Council. Thirdly, there was now an elected majority in Legislative Council. In the previous Council 5 elected members were balanced by 8 nominated, and 2 elected members, with the Administrator as President having a casting vote only. Fourthly, an attempt was now made to solve the old problem of an independent executive which had played with the administration of the Government. The new Executive Council was to consist of the Administrator, 2 officials, 2 members selected from Legislative Council and removable by a 2/3 vote of the Legislative Council. This reform was rather limited, for while it was true that now the electorate had responsibilities on the advisory council to the Administrator, even if they were united they could not prevail. They must rely on the support of the nominated member. In addition the Administrator could act contrary to the advice of Executive Council, if he considered it right to do so. In such cases the Administrator had to refer such matters to the Secretary of State, giving reasons for his decision, but since he was likely to support his appointee, in fact the Administrator was supreme. Where the views of the nominated members differed from those of the elected members, the elected members were outvoted, and frustration often resulted. Elected members could not consider themselves as part of the Government, and saw themselves as free to criticize the Government and its policy in or out of Legislative Council.

These were the basic proposals which were amended or varied slightly as time passed. It was truly a milestone in the constitutional history of the island. Nearly 1/2 of a century had to elapse for the Colony to regain the constitutional status that it began with. Of course there were improvements on that constitution. There was one variation which followed later. The Legislative Council was divided into three (3) committees, of which each of the elected members of Executive Council was chairman, and the administration of various departments of Government was assigned to the three (3) Committees. The direc-

tions of the chairman were merely advice to the Heads of Departments though in practice they were normally followed. The inherent weakness in the system was manifest. The elected member was expected to be responsible to both Councils for the departments under his charge even though he could not dictate policy, but only could act in an advisory capacity to the Heads of departments under his charge. This was a quasi-Ministerial system in which a period of apprenticeship would be served by those who would operate the Ministerial system.

Meanwhile the ministerial form of government had already been introduced in the larger territories - Jamaica and Trinidad. The Windwards, particularly Grenada, felt that this advance was long overdue. After some agitation the new system was granted in 1956. Provisions were made for the appointment of three (3) Ministers who were to be responsible for Trade, Social Services, and Communications and Works. Executive Council was changed somewhat. An extra elected member was added so that now there were two (2) official, one nominated and (4) elected members. The Administrator remained as president with a casting vote. Executive Council now being dominated by elected members was also the chief instrument of policy. In the exercise of his executive functions the Administrator was bound to consult and accept the advice of Executive Council in all but certain specified matters. Executive Council members had to accept collective responsibility for the decisions of Executive Council, and to support all measures of Government in the Legislative Council. All matters of finance and those involving expenditure were to remain under the sole control of the Administrator acting through the Financial Secretary. At a full meeting of the Legislative Council held in January of 1956 the three ministers were elected. They were Honourables R. E. Baynes for Trade and Production, G. H. Charles for Social Services and C. L. Tannis for Communications and Works.

The next constitutional advance became effective from January 1st, 1960. Provisions were now made for the appointment of a Chief Minister and Minister of Finance. This was to be the member who, in the judgement of the Administrator, is most likely to command the confidence of a majority of the elected members of Legislative Council. All the other ministers were to be appointed by the Administrator on the advice of the Chief Minister. The Financial Secretary no longer held a seat in the Legislative or Executive Council, but now was expected to attend Executive Council as an adviser to the Minister of Finance. The Administrator remained as president of Executive Council, but no longer sat at Legislative Council meetings. In his place provision was made for the appointment of a Speaker either from among the elected members of, or from without the Legislative Council, and this organisation of Government is likely to remain with us until the implementation of the New Proposals.

Before closing there are two other factors I wish to mention which, I believe, contributed to

our rather accelerated movement to self-government. One is the fact that since World War II, and particularly from the later fifties onwards, many countries, especially African, have moved rapidly on to independence. These have shown not only the way i.e. that it could be done the way it was done, but also they were loud in proposing that the United Kingdom and other metropolitan countries should grant independence to their dependent colonies as quickly as possible. The second factor, related to the first, is the founding of the United Nations. This is the forum and the medium that many of these independent countries used to express their views. That these factors exerted some influence few would be prepared to deny, but the extent of that influence could only be accurately assessed by study of detailed information.

Quite a few conclusions may be drawn from a study of the history of our constitutional advance. The one which I wish to emphasize necessitates dividing our history into two periods. In the first we observe that our constitutional development depended upon factors operating more upon the domestic scene. Advance was not only slow but depended upon the occurrence of crises. Moreover whatever advance was granted was usually much smaller than what was demanded and, worse still was much less than was needed to placate adequate the crises. This mistake made by Colonial Office in this Chapter was that of giving too little too late. In the second period our politics has taken on an international flavour. Our constitutional development becomes connected with forces and situations not only far removed from our shores, but also bearing only the slightest apparent relevance. International crises are now the precursors and almost the sole determinants of our constitutional advance. By comparison advance is much quicker. Could it be that the opposite mistake is being made, that of giving too much too soon?

ON AFRO-WEST INDIAN THINKING

BY KERWYN L. MORRIS.

Vincentians like many other West Indians suffer from a very deep-seated European orientation. An orientation that is historical in origin and reflects a negative relationship. A relation that we do not want to be reminded of—a relationship between slave and master.

Such an orientation can do no good for us as Afro-West Indians. I say Afro-West Indians for that is what we are. We are a people basically of African stock whether we want to accept this or not. But it is no direct fault of ours that we, a black people, are European in our orientation. Our orientation is the product of slavery and the deliberate doings of those British imperialists who, in drawing up our education syllabuses refused to include any mention of great black West Indians like Toussaint L' Overture, Marcus Garvey, Sylvester Williams, George Padmore, and C. L. R.

James, to name but a few. We were never told of these men, so that in our search for heroes as youngsters we found our men in imperialists like William the Conqueror, Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill.

Further we were never told of the true history of the land whence we were brought—black Africa our fatherland. We were never told that Black Africa was more civilised than Europe throughout history and so we were robbed of the black pride that our forefathers brought with them when they arrived in chains. We were never told that it was as a result of contact with Europeans that the glorious path of African development was altered. We were never told that centuries before the Europeans discovered the world was round our fathers made their pilgrimages to Mecca crossing the Sahara Desert from the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai in West Africa using the stars for guidance. We were never told of the black kings and queens whose armies defeated early European attempts to capture us. But instead, to facilitate and prolong our subservience and oppression to this day we were told that we were cannibals and savages. Had we been exposed to Garvey and had our parents been more attentive when he spoke at our library in Kingstown, they might have followed him up and learned from him that "when Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savages, naked men, heathens and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters in art, science, and literature, cultured and refined." And as Garvey also said and which unadulterated anthropological history proves true,

"Out of cold old Europe these white men came, From caves, dens, and holes, without any fame, Eating their dead's flesh and sucking their blood, Relics of a Mediterranean flood"

So that our black fathers were once great and proud men but we shall never be as great or as proud of ourselves as they were of themselves until we learn to think independently. Until we learn to think as Afro-West Indians as we truly are and not as Euro-West Indians. As Garvey further said "We have a beautiful history and we shall create another in the future that will astonish the world." West Indians need to discover their long lost black pride which was so systematically removed by the same people who have us in colonial bondage up to this day, so that there is not the remotest possibility of asserting one's West Indian personality while embracing a European orientation. The latter must be dispensed with.

There is in our midst an abundance of hypocrites and black Uncle Toms who very often cannot see any further than their noses. These are the most dangerous elements of our society and the greatest obstacles to change. The so-called middle-class or black bourgeoisie is their breeding ground. They flourish there. Lately these elements have been brandishing lip-service to West-Indianisation yet they are found to be more European than the

Europeans themselves. They make their frequent trips to their "Mother Country", then stand aloft on the Swiss Alps next door and look down with disdain upon the mass of black humanity. They become white like the surrounding snow for a moment. For them the well-dressed West-Indian is one who chokes himself with a tie (the symbol of and replacement for the chains that once squeezed our necks) and suffocates in a jacket. To further express my disgust with this manner of dress and terms of reference, I shall quote a poet from French Guiana, Leon Damas who in his poem called "Balance Sheet" said:—

"I feel ridiculous
in their shoes, in their dinner jackets,
in their stiff shirts, their paper collars,
with their monocles and their bowler hats.
I feel ridiculous
with my toes that were not made
to sweat from morning to evening,
in their swaddling clothes that weaken
my limbs
and deprive my body of its beauty"

The same reactionary elements because of their orientation and its accompanying shortcomings and petty-mindedness are thus rendered grossly incapable of recognising the true and full value of a successful Afro-West Indian when they are presented with one. However, I ask those who are weathering the storm "to hold strain" for it would not be long before others return to join in the struggle against these black middle-class humbugs—the enemies of progress. Progress for them means the usage of foreign personnel in preference to nationals when nationals are available; the fools and idiots have never been taught to value anything of their own origin.

As the elections draw nigh there is talk of West Indianising St Vincent through the use of text-books with a West Indian orientation. This may be adequate for those people of school age and those out of school who could actually read. But what about those who cannot read, how are they to be West-Indianised? It will have to be by action rather than by spoken or written word and I am afraid there is no half-way measure where action is concerned, for action knows no compromise. How can we talk to them of West-Indian orientation and at the same time leave the dry-rotten faded out portraits of European Governors, queens and kings in our livingrooms? How can we go to Victoria Park and present arms to the British National Anthem and still talk of West Indianisation to these people? The very name of the park must be changed, the anthem must be discarded for it was never intended to save us from damnation but only the sovereign. Can't we see it calls only for our continued subjection—"long to reign over us"? Can't we see that this is inviting continued oppression and subservience? Imagine the sons and daughters of Britain's slaves singing "Rule Britannia". Britain never shall be slaves! Are we out of minds or something? Britain never

shall be enslaved we lustily sing, while we are still held in colonial bondage by her. And we are proud to sing this for the reward of a heavy-bread and a hot sweet-drink? Poor us! Brass medals must be returned or refused or given to the 'yeah-yeah' boys, and there must be concerted efforts aimed at dispensing with the Queen's Birthday Parade. The island must be renamed Hairoun, its original name. I strongly feel that it is only by methods such as these that mass mobilisation and complete West Indianisation can be achieved. Are we prepared to use these methods? West Indianisation calls for positive action now rather than idle words.

To old colonial stooges this stinks with disloyalty and disrespect, but they must know that the concept of loyalty was one of the tools that forged a success out of colonialism. The more loyal you are the more colonised and subservient you are. Are we content to remain colonised and subservient? No! There is thus a choice to be made. One cannot remain colonial minded and be truly West-Indianised at the same time, and since the choice is for the latter then the former must take its exit and the sooner the better. We can never assert our true selves under a colonial mentality. If we want to be true Afro-West Indians then down with colonialism and all its symbols and stooges.

A COMMENT ON THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS By KENNETH JOHN

Like a bolt from the blue news reached us not too long ago that new constitutional instruments were to be placed into the hands of our local parliament which brought us more or less up to the level of an internally self-governing country. The news was accorded a mixed reception. Some middle-class folk reacted in typical bourgeois fashion. They believe that the island is not ready for the exercise of such a large slice of power. They believe that democracy means mob rule and that an internally self-governing St. Vincent will grow to seed. They have convinced themselves that the island will go 'Communist', that a one-party state will be entrenched, that dictatorship and authoritarian rule will follow in train, that elections will be no more. The Civil Service Association in a circular letter to members waxed hysterical over the proposed changes, and the "Vincentian" newspaper expressed alarmist fears over this suggested assumption of partial autonomy. Hardly anywhere has there been a reasoned approach to the coming event. People seem only to have strong emotional feelings one way or another. The Chief Minister had to go on "the air" to comfort frayed nerves and solicit co-operation and the Leader of the Opposition

had to demolish a "Vincentian" editorial. The Public Relations Office sent out copies of the Proposals and invited groups and bodies to send in memoranda, but some folk believed that that was only a token gesture to democratic practice, for the Government's mind was already made up on the kind of constitution that they wanted. Suspicion, mistrust and doubt poisoned the atmosphere and any assurances from the Government in power only confirmed what clever people they were. But one must take the British offer as the point of departure and see what we can make of it; not mourn and lament over the possibility of deciding our own fate. The stark truth is that Britain wants to be rid of us for we are an embarrassment to her in this world of decolonisation. And if the British wish to cut the navel string that binds us it is only left for us to take up the challenge without murmur, even if some of us cannot accept the change with acclamation.

Still there are some criticisms which can legitimately be directed at the Proposals, and the chief one is the method of their creation. Constitutions, if they are meant to be more than a legal curiosity, must spring from the soil where they are to function and any imposed document stands a good chance to fail. The British Constitution, such as it is, just grew; it evolved to meet the social state and peculiar conditions of the British people. It has history and a tradition behind it. Though it is not "written" it still exists and is effective, for it reflects the behavioural patterns and political culture of the people whose government it governs. The same principle holds with the American and Russian constitutions which were framed by the people involved, who drafted them to embody specific conditions, and who abide easily by them because they are homespun and spring naturally from the social make-up of the particular country. Not so our constitutional proposals. They have been handed down from on high, a reflection of the colonial relationship, and any concurrence with local problems could only be coincidental. It has become a habit among our people to have all their problems solved from outside. And no matter how much one is incensed with this approach one has always to remember that colonialism and slavery have made us an externally oriented people always looking to "they" never to "we", and the misgivings and hesitancy with which we move to accept self-government are enough to justify the British idea of a push-start. But there are some Vincentians who still cling tenaciously to the thought, perhaps in an academic sort of way, that on the verge of our Independence we should have been permitted to draft our own constitution, say with the help of the departments of Government and Sociology at the University of the West Indies. As things are our terms of reference are severely limited and our categories of thought restricted

to purely British terms. We seem to be left only with the prospect of recommending modifications, suggesting piece-meal changes and altering details, whereas the possibility exists that our purposes might have been better served by the total rejection of the proposals and a re-writing of a constitution with an eye on our problems rather than ingeniously seeking to manipulate a pre-fabricated document to cater for indigenous needs.

The Constitutional Proposals are a pale imitation of the British approach to politics which has generally been taught to us as representing the very acme of political development. But the pattern of British politics is not shaped by the political institutions which ostensibly govern it, but by the entrenchment of a particular party-system which we cannot institute by fiat. Then there are political imponderables such as the existing scale of values and prevailing attitudes which can spell the world of difference when it comes to operating a constitution. Thirdly the structure of interest in an advanced, industrialized society demands a different type of constitutional arrangement from one which will be more appropriate to an under-developed country. And, finally, in the British approach to politics there is a nice divorce between appearance and reality, between the theory and practice of Government. For example where a Britisher would on principle be bound by a convention, in a politically unsophisticated St. Vincent (after a manner of speaking) most rules and regulations would need to be explicitly stated.

Which brings us to the Proposals themselves. In paragraph 1 it is stated that "The Queen's Representative will be appointed by her Majesty. In relation to such appointments it will be understood, although not expressed as law, that the Secretary of State will be guided by the advice of the Chief Minister of the territory". Bearing in mind what was stated before probably such an important matter should not rest on a "convention" and in the interest of clarity it should be stated boldly that such an appointment will be made on the advice of the Chief Minister. Some people may think that one is playing with words but the Queen's representative should not be styled "Governor". "Governor" is too emotive, symbolising the master-servant relationship which is in the process of being severed. It presents mental pictures of gubernatorial plumes and white charger which as unwanted relics of a colonial past should be relegated to the dusty cupboards of history. "Administrator" should be retained or, better yet, "Commissioner" introduced. The Administrator should not be given a discretion in the matter of the dissolution of the Legislature. That would be a high-handed measure inconsistent with the concept of Internal Self-Government. It must be the absolute right of the Chief

Minister to call the political tune, to dictate the general tempo of politics, and to decide when he can best face the polls. To change this in our political context would be to lend official sanction to the sordid display in party defection where a member of the Legislative Council might bring down the Government by crossing the floor and form part of another Government without having to test his strength at the polls.

The delicate question of a one-or two chamber house has wisely been left for local decision. It is not surprising that a people whose way of thinking for donkey's years has been railroaded along set lines does not even remotely see the practicability of a unicameral legislature. They think such a notion is outlandish; we must have our local "House of Lords." In Jamaica where this same mode of thought obtained a senate which is a thinly-veiled alter ego of the Lower House is a good revising chamber, it helps to clean up untidy bills, that the expert personnel might suggest useful amendments, that since it will not be dependent on the electorate for its life then there is the likelihood of impartial debate, that by delaying bills it allows time for public opinion to crystallise around major issues. The truth is that most of these arguments are untenable in poor countries where the problems are obtrusive, the issues clear-cut and the experts almost non-existent. If there is a need for the inclusion of "Elder Statesmen" into the Governmental process then they can be accommodated as a nominated element in the Lower House where the country will be enriched by the value of their debate without suffering reverses from their collective voting power. Upper Chambers are picturesque, they add to the glamour of government, but they suffer from the twin illness that they are either too weak and useless, or too strong and obstructionist. It would not be surprising if Victorians who have a built-in fear of self-government opt for a powerful Senate to thwart the will of the people's representatives. Indeed the philosophy seems to be that if Britain wants to consign us to governing ourselves then the best we can do is so to dilute and hamstring the progressive forces by entrenched conservative positions as to render the whole exercise sterile. For as an eminent political scientist once remarked that Upper Chambers "have been instituted, and are maintained not from disinterested love of mature deliberation, but because there is something their makers wished to defend against the rest of the community, especially inherited possessions and status." The question is, would the realities of the situation make a mockery of the form as in the Jamaican case or, as seems more likely, would we be encumbered by a local senate which stands as a conservative bastion against democratic trends? Or do we stand an outside

chance of not having to cope with a non-elected house at all?

The proposals suggest that most of the constitution could be changed by a two-thirds majority of the Lower House and a simple majority of the Upper House, if the latter has been introduced. But nine "basic clauses" have been entrenched and to effect any changes in these the special majority in the Lower House is needed plus an affirmative response from two-thirds of the electorate voting in a referendum. Such an amendment process is too rigid, the referendum in particular being too cumbersome and unwieldy. It would be a much better idea to have Governments returned to power with a particular mandate on important questions than that they should be constantly subjected to referring the matter back to the people. Referenda are notorious for their conservatism and if we are to have a flexible constitution pliant enough to sway with the breezes of the changing times, if we are to ensure a stable government by representation rather than delegation, then it is necessary to reduce, at least, the number of instances when the referendum must be used. We would limit its use to the following clauses only (1) the position of Her Majesty and Her Representative, the fundamental rights and freedoms, and the procedure for alteration of the Constitution by the Legislature of the territory. Even so one can still question the ground for entrenching fundamental rights and freedoms. If they are protected it is not usually because they are enshrined in a Bill of Rights which, in the scheme of things, is usually either superfluous or ineffective. It seems that many constitution-makers are not so much concerned with hard facts as they are with beautiful phrases, and are blinded to the simple truth that a Bill of Rights is mainly of decorative value in any constitution. As that great British jurist Dicey has pointed out, Habeas Corpus Acts are "for practical purposes worth a hundred constitutional articles guaranteeing human liberty." Real freedom can only be truly safeguarded by the ordinary law of the land, an independent judiciary, a democratic Government, and a tolerant public opinion. Where any one, or a combination of these, falls short guarantees cannot hold water, and the prettier the phrases the more treacherous they are. No so-called freedom is absolute and once the saving clause "within the limits of the law" is invoked, it degenerates into meaninglessness. Take "Freedom of Expression" which often adorns Bills of Rights. This may be abridged "in the interest of defence, public safety, public order etc.," and it is the Government of the day only which can say when those interests have been threatened. Still there is something to say for a Bill of Rights. It sets a standard for Government, possesses nuisance value and deters subtle encroachment on indivi-

dual rights. It may not be a powerful barrier against totalitarian rule but it certainly is a hurdle and even that, little though it be, is a good thing in this power-crazy world.

On the controversial question of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence one can venture little comment. The British are advertising in a totally unwarranted manner that they are fed up to the teeth with us. There is no alternative but to take the hint and hurriedly seek an honourable way out. On the other hand it is unfair that Britain can shed us by a simple order-in-council. A period of, say, six months should elapse between introduction of a bill to that effect and its first reading in Commons. In this way the country would be given time to sort out its business and plan ahead, opposition forces in Britain could marshal their facts and world opinion on this issue might crystallise. Proposals on the judiciary seem reasonable, except that some locally based authority, and not the British Lord Chancellor, should appoint our Chief Justice. But one is hard put to understand the reason why only a select group of people headed by the British Government Representative can challenge the constitutionality of any law. That should be the undoubted right of every citizen.

One suspects that in true British fashion it is expected that a conventional *modus vivendi* will work itself out in an atmosphere of give-and-take in the matter of the appointment of Permanent Secretaries. That is crying for the moon. The proposals read that the Chief Minister "will have a voice" (whatever that means) in such appointments. Again, for the sake of clarity it should be clearly spelled out that the Chief Minister must ratify the appointments recommended to him by the relevant Service Commission. The proposals of Commissions for the day-to-day governance of the Civil Service and Police are acceptable but it should be added that in keeping with the idea of full internal self-government the Police should ultimately be accountable to a Minister of Home Affairs. General notice is served that this is likely to be an area of a considerable conflict of views, but the argument is simple: either we are independent in local affairs or we are not. We have supped full of half-way houses, compromises and hybrids. It will not do to say that we are free on paper when we are not so in fact, and the control of the police may determine the answer. If panicky people and timid souls who fear their own shadows do not have confidence in a politically controlled police then the thing to do is to make ourselves an object of derision the world-over by staging demonstrations against self-government and holding on apron-stringed in perpetuo to a reluctant Britain. The trouble is that Britain will not have us, and that's another story. The Proposals are guilty of one grave omission in that they give no guidance as

to the prescribed manner of appointment of the Service Commissions. It is suggested here that this should be done on a three-yearly basis on the advice of the Chief Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

After providing us with twenty-two paragraphs of proposals which broadly speaking are negotiable the Colonial Office in one full paragraph undoes the whole business. Paragraph twenty-four is obnoxious. It stinks with colonialism and smacks of the old gun-boat diplomacy. In fact it is a negation of all that has been suggested and is a cancellation of the whole concept of Internal Self Government. After stating that Britain will have full Legislative powers connected with the discharge of defence and her external responsibilities the proposals go on to state blandly that "these legislative powers will extend to the making of any provision (including provision relating to any matter in the field of internal government) which appear to Parliament or Her Majesty in Council necessary to prevent circumstances arising or continuing in the territory that may prejudice the discharge of Britain's responsibilities. Such legislation will prevail over any law in force in the territory, with the exception of the Constitution, and may confer functions on any officers or authorities of the Government of the territory as well as upon other persons or authorities. The power to enact such legislation will not be invoked unless the Government of the territory has been requested to take the appropriate action within a time to be specified in each case and has not done so." In short the British pretend to give us management of our own affairs which they can confirm overnight by shedding us on the one hand, but which they are free to abrogate on the other hand by simply walking right back in. Britain cannot eat her cake and have it. Whenever both parties are at a deadlock on these issues then the British Government should use the threat of severing political links as their sole remedy against the recalcitrant associate. If the "delinquent" Government has the backing of its people then it is a clear sign that it is self-reliant enough to determine its own destiny.

These have been our general comments on the Proposals. They will certainly not be the last word on the matter but one sincerely hopes that they have helped to clear the thick undergrowth of warped thinking which has cluttered the issue. The facts are that we are an encumbrance to certain people and they wish to rid themselves of us. We have repeatedly failed to produce any feasible suggestions so we have been offered Internal Self-Government with the immediate prospect of full Independence if we want it. But the ear-marked Constitution is a bastard off-spring of the British Constitution which is inexportable and we need first to tailor it to meet local conditions and not slap it on

out-and-dried. A British Prime Minister once remarked that "Constitutions are easily copied, temperaments not; and if it should happen that the borrowed constitution and the native temperament fail to correspond, the misfit may have serious results." The recent political turbulence in Nigeria is perhaps a case in point. The answer does not lie in hanging on pathetically to the so-called mother-country, but in devising or adapting as best we could constitutional instruments which are rooted in our own experience, which are attuned to our own personality and are consistent with our political aspirations. To that end groups, associations, organisations as well as individuals must study the Proposals seriously and make recommendations. It is more negative nonsense to fold arms and make ourselves prophets of doom when we are clearly in a position to steer the country clear of calamity and ensure a bright future by helping to fashion an appropriate constitution which takes into consideration the prospect of a regional grouping, by educating an informed public opinion, and by creating a vigilant citizenry. Important as the Constitution appears to be, it is but an impersonal vehicle on which we may travel almost any road we wish. It is left to us to read the democratic philosophy of life into the neutral language of the final document. In the last resort constitutions are only the legal skeleton around which a nation is built. We are the flesh and blood to clothe that soulless bit of machinery. For better or for worse the decision is thrown in our laps.

'AN EDUCATION PROBLEM'

BY NORMA KEIZER.

It is very difficult to focus on any single area in the field of education in St Vincent, and pinpoint the educational problem. There are many ills which beset education and all of them warrant immediate attention, for they are all related and only a co-ordinated approach on several fronts will be able to produce results. Still, I hope to stress here the prime need for improving primary education though I will not do so to the exclusion of demanding all-round-improvements in other areas. But the demographic facts are striking and forces one to pay some attention to the school population of the island. The 1964 census shows that St. Vincent has a birth-rate of over forty per thousand, one of the highest in the Caribbean. More significantly 43,295 persons out of a total of 87,000 are under fifteen years old. In other words about fifty per cent of the population are of primary school age. And recent work in the paediatric field sponsored by the Save the Children Fund has ensured the possibility of a continuing progressive decline in the infant mortality rate which is currently on the downswing. Given the age structure of the

population and the birth—and death rates it is anticipated that room will have to be provided annually for upwards of one thousand children where the country is already hard put to accommodate the present school-going population. In fact eight thousand places are needed right now.

In order to understand the magnitude of this problem, we should look at the environment in which this population explosion is taking place. Ours is a poor country which cannot even balance its budget. We are living partly on the dole. Education is not compulsory. Only 27% of our population has completed 6th and 7th standard work; only 5 out of every 100 primary school children finally attend secondary schools. The picture grows gloomier when we think that only 0.3% of our population has an advanced level or university education. The Civil Service which comprises almost the bulk of our middle class people, according to Carleen O'Laughlin, is not of a high level as regards skills and qualifications. This last factor has been partly responsible for the fact that so far we have had no planned educational programme.

For the past decade or so government has been rebuilding dilapidated schools, extending or building new schools in areas where there were previously no schools or where there was overcrowding. Attempts at providing more accommodation for children at primary school age are indeed laudable. This, I suppose, is to ensure a literate people who it is believed would assist in the political and economic development of the islands. One can argue that the emphasis on educating the masses is right for it is necessary to have not only a literate people, but also an educated one who would know when they are being led or misled in these days of responsible government. Hence it is necessary to teach people not only the basic three R's but also to think and reason logically.

Despite the great improvements in school places enrollment and accommodation figures still show overcrowding. Primary school teachers in some areas are still asked to teach as many as 80 or more children in a class. The schools are inadequately provided with materials for teaching effectively. Many schools are still of the "barn yard" type, which means that classes are separated from each other by movable blackboards. This at times makes it difficult for the children to hear and understand what the teachers are saying. The situation is at its worst when many classes are reading aloud at the same time. The larger numbers make the time available for individual correction by the teachers very small indeed, and this often results in rote or parrot-like type of learning. Learning seems to be the acquisition of isolated facts, names and dates, more or less a body of inert ideas. This I think might be one reason which prevents many children from being really interested in education. For them education boils down to the reading and writing that you do at school. Their interest is never sufficiently aroused, neither are they really made to understand that education is a process which goes on for life. No

wonder that there is a large percentage of lapsed literacy in the island, but there are additional reasons for this. I think that it can also be explained by the ineducative environment in which we live and by the high drop out or wastage rates in the primary school. Only a small fraction of those who enter the first class in a primary school ever complete the fourth, fifth or sixth standard. The drop outs even begin as early as the age of 11. For example in 1962 the primary school distribution was as follows:—

Stage I	—	5820
Stages II & III	—	4729
Standard I	—	2729
" II	—	2908
" III	—	2503
" IV	—	1913
" V	—	1390
" VI	—	969

Why is there so much wastage? The answer lies in the fact that many people enter the first class, drop out, sometimes return as repeaters, and drop out again. In some school the teaching fails to inspire or interest the children. Another point to be noted is that unless some parents see some clear-cut economic incentive for keeping their children at school, they allow them to drop out. It is a sad thing to say but there are children whose parents or guardians honestly cannot afford to keep them at school for any length of time. All this results not only in a tremendous economic loss but in a personal one as well. Education in St Vincent is not compulsory, and so I envisage that the problem of wastage is likely to remain unsolved if education continues to be voluntary. It is not right to be complacent about this matter on the ground that there are not enough school places. We should try to rescue our children not only by improving the conditions at the school but also by making education compulsory.

More schools mean more teachers. Quantity does not necessarily mean quality. The history of the recruitment of teachers in St. Vincent has shown that quality has always been sacrificed for quantity. In the 1933 Marriott Mayhew Report, the following statement was made:

"It is not primarily from a lack of teachers that the schools are suffering but from a lack of competent teachers."

I venture to say that the condition is hardly better today. It is a well known fact that secondary failures form a sizeable proportion of the primary school staffs. We know that more teachers are being trained annually yet my claim still holds good. Salaries are too low to attract able teachers. There is little incentive for those who are teachers to improve their standard.

Despite the repeated criticisms and recognition of the need for training teachers, there has never been a trained teaching profession in the West Indies. St. Vincent has been no exception. It is true that more and more teachers are being trained every year, yet no move has been made to see that every

teacher is trained. It is a formidable task I agree, but have we experimented as yet with crash programmes for teacher training? What about inservice training? We are very proud that we have a Teachers' College. It is indeed a sign of progress. The annual output of trained teachers however is too small. It therefore appears that it will be many years before all the teachers in the primary schools are trained. The present solution depends on how effective those trained teachers are when they return to their schools. They can help to stimulate the other teachers and assist with inservice training. Government can further assist by giving incentives to teachers who raise their academic qualifications and professional standards. I regard this training of teachers as an important matter. The majority of teachers do not know why they are educating their children. It is not enough to say that we are educating them for life. What does this statement mean? Surely it doesn't mean teaching them only to read and write. According to Shirley Gordon teachers are the ones who are called to interpret in the classroom the new values and challenges in our community, because they are not teaching only subjects but also teaching children. It is a well known fact that the quality of education we provide in schools depends on the standard and quality of the teachers.

Poor countries cannot afford to pay for as much education as richer ones therefore it is necessary to establish priorities in terms both of quality and quantity. It is not enough to expand enormously the spread of education, it must also be set along the right lines. A famous economist, Sir Arthur Lewis, stated that the structure of an economy imposes its own limit on what education can achieve. Yet there is a strong positive correlation between a country's educational development and its economic productivity. Barbados and Trinidad are good examples of this.

It is time we begin to think of education as an investment. Bearing this in mind, we can argue that since education of all kinds is underdeveloped we should expand on all levels. Unfortunately it is not possible to give top priority to everything and so we take into consideration not what is considered a mere urgent necessity but what is absolutely indispensable for political, social and economic progress. Were we to put primary education at the top of the list of priorities we must remember that quantity must be balanced against quality; expenditure on building against expenditure on equipment, material, texts and teacher training. The principal objective of the primary school education should be to raise the enrollment ratio by increasing the number of pupils who complete the full primary course. We can do this either by building senior schools or finding ways or means to make the senior section of the primary schools more attractive to our children. Should we aim at increasing the numbers of those who complete a full primary course, we can be far more effective in eliminating illiteracy. The failure or success of the

ISSUES IN THE WINDWARD-JAMAICA BANANA WAR

By GEORGE BECKFORD

Below we reprint the major part of an article first published in Vol. 2 No. 1 of *New World Quarterly*, with which Flambeau is associated. We believe that the subject dealt with is of overriding topical interest, and we especially recommend it as imperative reading to all.

The movement from colonialism to independence in the West Indies in recent years has been associated with internal conflict over one issue or another. There has hardly been a dull moment. The debate on the siting of the Federal capital, the Jamaican oil refinery issue, to federate or not to federate, and during the past year, the Windward-Jamaica banana conflict, are but a few outstanding examples. A clear exposition of the real issues involved in these conflicts is necessary in order to understand the dilemma of West Indian Society at this critical stage. The present paper attempts to analyse the most recent conflict in these terms.

Ever since the banana became a commodity of international trade in the late nineteenth century, Jamaica has been the chief West Indian exporter. Today, the situation has changed with the four Windward Islands of Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada together rivalling Jamaica for the top berth. All the islands depend almost exclusively on the British market for their banana exports. Export production in the Windwards expanded at a dramatic rate over the past ten years from about three million stems a year in 1956 to over ten million stems in 1964. And by the end of last year Windward supplies to the U. K. were slightly greater than those from Jamaica. Unfortunately, the combined total of Jamaica and the Windwards exceeded the amount the market could absorb at price levels obtaining in recent years and the bottom fell out of the market. Prices fell sharply from £70.15 a ton before mid-October to £63.15, then to £56.15 by November 7 and to a record low of £39.5 by December 28. Though prices have rallied since, they have generally remained below seasonal levels of recent years.

These developments have stimulated stormy debates between interested parties as well as between governments. The debates have provided some insight into the factors which create an impasse between West Indian territories over this and other issues. First, the banana war clearly exposes the vulnerability of the territories to manipulation by outside interests when operating as separate units. Second, public discussions arising from the conflict reveal the consistent failure of the West Indian Press (in so far as *THE DAILY GLEANER* is typical) to

analyse regional (and other) issues from the point of view of popular West Indian interests. Third, the conflict reveals the ambivalence of the "better-off" units like Jamaica in their relations with the "less advanced" territories on the one hand, and the rest of the world on the other.

In the first place, it will be established that these recent developments in the banana trade have resulted mainly from a conflict between two private firms and that no real conflict of interest existed between banana growers in Jamaica and the Windwards. West Indian growers were caught as pawns in a game between the agents they selected to market their fruits.

The banana industry in the West Indies as a whole consists of numerous small independent growers and a few relatively large producers. Administratively, the industry in the Windward Islands is serviced by grower co-operative-type associations which contract with Geest Industries Ltd., for marketing all export fruit. Decision making is simple, straightforward and relatively well representative of grower interests. And the associations have been able to secure good marketing arrangements from the agent.

The Jamaican industry, on the other hand, is serviced by an inefficient administrative super-structure consisting of the ABIGA, a growers' association, a statutory insurance scheme and the Banana Board, a statutory body which is the sole exporting agent. Recently, the inefficiencies were exposed by a team of foreign marketing consultants though they have been recognised by local observers for several years. The consultants, in fact merely extended points made by the local Sharp Commission of 1958-59, as they themselves admitted in their report. For exporting fruit, the Banana Board contracts with Elders and Fyffes, a subsidiary of United Fruit Company, and Jamaica Banana Producers Association, a Jamaican grower enterprise; but the latter is allotted only a minor share of total exports. Consequently, it is not considered in the rest of the discussion in this section.

All West Indian growers have the same basic interest; to obtain the best possible prices for all the fruit they supply to the market. This no one will deny. A struggle between growers for market shares is out of line with this basic interest since it is clear that higher prices could be obtained through co-operation, not only in regulating market supplies but also in realizing shipping economies if co-operation were extended to joint shipment by West Indian growers themselves. The marketing agents, on the other hand, are each primarily concerned with earning the highest possible rate of profit. Each agent would be better able to achieve this if it had a monopoly on the market. Elders and Fyffes were, indeed, in such a position before the emergence of Geest Industries; and have

therefore, been seriously concerned with the rapid erosion of their controlling and dominant position. There is no question that they would be in a happier position with Van Geest entirely out of the market, but at worst, they would be prepared to make an accommodation if only they could control the larger share of the market. The rapid growth of Van Geest, on the other hand, must surely have demonstrated to that firm the possibility that one day it might capture the whole market or at worst acquire control of the major share. There has as yet been no evidence that the two are prepared for a compromise market-sharing agreement. In the normal course of events, some form of market-agreement would tend to emerge when competitive tactics (price cutting, etc.) have resulted in sustained losses by either or both firms.

The point at issue here, however, is that the basic interests of the two groups of West Indian growers are more in line with each other than they are with the private interests of the respective marketing agents. Yet it appears that each agent was able to manipulate the representatives of each group of growers to align with the individual agent and, thus, create an artificial conflict between Windwards and Jamaican grower representatives.

Even before the first big price decline of mid-October, grower representatives from Jamaica and the Windwards had decided to meet and discuss "the orderly marketing of fruit in the U. K." The meeting had been scheduled for late October 1964. The *Daily Gleaner* of October 17, 1964, made the following statement in reporting on the forthcoming parley.

"The Windwards have always accepted it (agreement on the regulation of supplies) in principle. But they make it clear that they wanted their share of supplies to the market to be on percentage. This the Banana Board (Jamaica) was never willing to concede."

The talks in Kingston began on October 22, and from the outset it was clear that the issue of market-sharing would be the focus of attention. The *Daily Gleaner* of October 23, reporting on the opening of the conference stated that:

"One of the principal bases for arriving at agreement on not over-flooding the market in the future will be the percentage of British demand which each territory is supplying at the time of agreement, informed sources at the Banana Building report."

The grower representatives met by themselves for the first two days. Prior to the conference they had invited their respective marketing agents to join the talks in the closing stages, ostensibly to inform them of whatever decisions the representatives made earlier. But after two days, the representatives could reach no agreement. Time posed no immediate problem.

whole structure depends on the teachers, but they cannot be expected to perform superhuman tasks in the primary schools if the problems of overcrowding and lack of teaching materials are not dealt with. It is a tremendous strain on our economy to be building new schools. In such circumstances, I think emergency short term measures such as building sheds or using a double shift system can be tried, but only on a short term basis. With the double shift system the children go to school only for half days, some in the mornings and some in the afternoons. This however sometimes work successfully only with the youngest children. The advantage is that teachers can have smaller classes and so give more time and attention to each child. Both learning and teaching can become more effective. It would first be necessary to brief parents on the reasons and advantages of any new measures. Failure to get the support of parents may well frustrate all attempts.

So much has been said of primary education that the impression might be given that primary education should be placed on the top of a list of priorities. Actually, I believe that Secondary education should be given first consideration. You may argue that without a good primary education there can be no good sound basis for a secondary education. This is true, but you will remember that earlier I said that the only result of very rapid expansion in the primary schools will be dilution and a lowering of standards. It is very expensive to keep putting up buildings and, surely, buildings and children do not by themselves make schools. And here I want to suggest what is meant by secondary education. It refers to the type of education which a child should receive after eleven - plus. In other words the term is broadly used and is not confined to the brand of education given in our secondary grammar schools. If we try to improve the quality of the standard of education in the senior section of our elementary school, we can encourage children to remain in school until the age of 15 and give them a secondary education for a period of at least four years. This would entail taking up quite a bit of slack, the results of sad neglect for a number of years. For in St. Vincent there has been no provision for post-primary students who have been squeezed out of secondary school places owing to the bottle-neck caused by lack of facilities or by limited opportunities springing from stringent financial circumstances. In this category the authorities can think of setting up Trade Schools, centres for commercial work, embark on agricultural education programmes, as well as open up avenues to provide evening classes in the more strictly academic subjects. One result of this would be to raise the general standard of education and so create the right climate for progress in other fields. It is a venture which is likely to pay handsome dividends in the long run. It is a task which is worth almost any price.

They had a week and a half during which time they could have a chance to consult with their Government, with others and with themselves informally in order to pave the way for a mutually satisfactory compromise. Instead, they took the traditional easy, but disastrous, alternative of asking "outside" interests to solve the problem for them. According to a Gleaner report of October 24:

"No formula was agreed. Instead it was agreed that the 14 Windward Islands representatives will consult Mr. N. Van Geest on Monday morning next for evolution of a satisfactory formula. At the same time, the Jamaican representatives will consult with Elders and Fyffes and the Jamaica Banana Producers Association. (After that) the two sides will meet again to see if a mutually satisfactory arrangement can be made."

This time the "outside" arbitrators were the two private firms with vested interests in the final outcome—interests which, as indicated above, are somewhat out of line with those of the growers themselves and which remained irreconcilable in the particular situation. The nature of the case is undoubtedly clearer in retrospect but even at the time it should have been obvious to any serious observer that the difference could not be resolved by references to the two agents involved in a private struggle for market control. Indeed, this was the surest way to consolidate the impasse. Since there is no evidence that the representatives deliberately wanted the talks to fail, their course of action must be interpreted as reflecting complete ignorance of the real issues involved in the situation.

The same Gleaner report of October 24 stated that the reasons why no agreement had yet been reached were (i) that the Windward Islands would not bind themselves without prior Geest approval and (ii) the problem of supply quota (i.e. the quantities of fruit to be marketed in future by Jamaica and the Windwards, respectively). Jamaica wanted these to be based on 1963 shipments or on an average of the past three years while the Windwards wanted the quotas to be based on shipments in the last quarter prior to the talks, July-September 1964. Jamaica's proposals were basically preposterous. It would ensure that Jamaica, and Elder and Fyffes, would be continually assured of the major market share. And it made no concession to the fact that the Windwards' production was still expanding while that of Jamaica had been stable for some time.

The Windwards' proposal, on the other hand, involved concession on their part since in any realistic projection of supplies their share of the market in the July-September quarter would be smaller than would normally obtain in subsequent years. In fact, by December 1964 weekly

arrivals in the U.K. from the Windwards exceeded Jamaica's supplies by 25 per cent. In refusing the Windwards' proposals the Jamaica representatives revealed a characteristic shortsightedness and poor judgement. Past experience should have guided them to accept the proposal. For they had once before had the chance to secure a more favourable share if only they had conceded the principle of market-sharing on the occasion when the Windwards had first suggested this as the basis for regulating supplies to the U.K. They should, by now, have realised that postponement would always favour the Windwards.

Jamaica's proposals would no doubt have been satisfactory for Elders and Fyffes since it assured them of a major market share which they would otherwise fail to achieve. And they would never accept the Windwards' proposal so long as the one put forward by Jamaica remained a possibility. On the other hand, neither proposal could reasonably have been expected to satisfy Van Geest whose position would improve over time without any agreement. It should have surprised no one when the talks broke down after each delegation consulted with its marketing agent on the question of appropriate market shares.

After the breakdown of the talks, the banana bureaucracy in Jamaica launched a hostile campaign against the Windward Islands. The policy of the Board in fact, seemed to have been dictated more by the private interests of Elders and Fyffes than by the true interests of Jamaican growers, as the following considerations suggest. The Daily Gleaner of November 4, carried the headline! "Parley fails; Jamaica moves to counter Windwards' drive for 200,000 tons next year." The news item reported on a decision of the Banana Board to launch a "crash programme for bananas" aiming at "250,000 tons, (from present 175,000) in 1965". In announcing this, a spokesman for the Board was reported to have said:

"It would be plainly stupid for us, in such circumstances to stand by and allow the market in which we have always held sway to be dominated by those whom we must now regard, regretfully, as our direct competitors".

The Gleaner of November 21 further stated that the industry leaders in Jamaica were convinced that "the only way to avoid being pushed around was to have superior production to the Windwards."

As already suggested above, the primary interest of Jamaican and all West Indian growers must be to secure the best possible prices for the fruit they produce for export. It is clear, therefore, that a forced expansion programme would be detrimental to their interest since this would result in oversupply and lower prices for

all growers. To the growers themselves, dominance in the market must be a minor consideration, especially if this can only be achieved through a loss in revenue.

More direct evidence that the Banana Board was being used by Elders and Fyffes to help solve the latter's market control problem—at the expense of West Indian growers—is provided by the following news item in The Gleaner of November 28, after prices had fallen to £49.15 a ton with an oversupply of fruit:

"Two top executives of Elders and Fyffes flew into Kingston to advise the Banana Board of the marketing position and to arrive at a policy line. It is understood that decision was taken to exercise none of the curbs on shipment of bananas which are usually done when colder conditions set in and only best quality fruit is sent forward. The reasoning behind this decision was that any such measure would only cause the Windward Islands to expand their position in the market. It is now official banana industry policy to surrender no ground in the U.K. banana market."

It is clear from this that the Banana Board had passed the initiative for decision making and policy formulation over to Elders and Fyffes. A Statutory Authority is supposed to be responsible for policy formulation within the framework of overall Government policy. If it cannot perform this function it should be dissolved. In this case, the Board, it seems, was merely acting as an agent for implementing the policy decisions of its marketing agent, instead of the reverse! Ironically, these policy decisions were to the detriment of all West Indian growers. For as I indicated in Caribbean Quarterly in June 1964:

"it is clear that if the proposed expansion (in Jamaica) were to materialise, the only losers will be the growers themselves. The market will absorb the proposed increase in supply only at lower prices than would otherwise obtain; thus the British consumer will pay less for bananas, the marketing companies will earn more from the increased volume handled, and only the West Indian grower stands to lose."

By and large, the way in which industry leaders in the West Indies were exploited by private foreign interests (to the detriment of the growers they represent) is perhaps a reflection of the general bankruptcy of the whole leadership class in the West Indies. But of equal significance is the fact that the West Indies make themselves more vulnerable to this kind of self-destructive manipulation by outsiders when operating as separate units. For it is clear that if we were together as one unit, the scope for artificial conflicts of this type would be reduced.

More interesting days still lie ahead because Fyffes and United Fruit are aware of the limitations to expansion of production in Jamaica and are currently seeking another Commonwealth source of supplies to solve their market-control problem. It now seems that British Guiana will be the choice for dupe since negotiations with British Honduras were terminated following Dr. Jagan's defeat in Guyana. Earlier plans for production in Guyana had been suspended because the company was uncertain of Jagan's political posture. In a few years, then, Jamaica and Guyana will be at each others' throats and the present honey-moon between the Banana Board and Fyffes will be over. The handwriting is on the wall for those who care to see.

Most of us are well aware of the functional limitations of the conventional West Indian press. The manner in which the Daily Gleaner participated in the banana debate is only one example of an everyday phenomenon. It was also bad enough that the representatives of the West Indian industry, particularly those in Jamaica, allowed themselves to be manoeuvred by the private marketing firms. But perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of the entire debate is the fact that when the Jamaican Government formally entered the picture, its spokesman, — the Minister of Trade and Industry — endorsed the Banana Board's policy, a policy which, as pointed out above, was really handed down by Elders and Fyffes and which was hardly in the true interest of Jamaican growers.

The following excerpt is taken from a policy statement by Mr. Lightbourne, Jamaica's Trade Minister, "on his return from Britain where he had talks with Jamaica's agents on the island's banana trade there," (Daily Gleaner, February 6, 1965):

"it is essential at this time that we continue to sell all we can to Britain, because if we do not the Windwards will flood the market with their surplus production. we must not allow the Windwards to take over from us in a market that is traditionally ours."

It appears that Mr. Lightbourne, like the Board, allowed himself to be bamboozled by Elders and Fyffes who no doubt seduced him with the argument of traditional Jamaican dominance, as if this could in anyway increase export earnings and bring more incomes to Jamaican banana growers. On the contrary, since dominance would mean over-supply on the market it could only be secured through lower prices to growers. All along, Fyffes was playing on Jamaica's characteristic insularity and petty nationalism which blinded not only the Banana Board and the Gleaner but the Jamaican Government as well. None of these could see the real issues involved even though they were obvious enough, as New World Fortnightly, The

Times and Economist were able to demonstrate. The constitutional independence of Jamaica appears farcical in the particular context. For the Government had the appearance of a puppet for the ventriloquist, Elders and Fyffes. Where, as the chain of policy formulation and decision-making should normally be from the Government to the Statutory Authority then to the Authority's marketing agent for implementation, the actual linkage in this case was backward. A private firm called the tune and all Jamaica jumped.

The Minister's policy statement, detrimental as it was to the growers themselves, also shows an unsympathetic approach to a problem crucial to the Windwards' economies and at the same time peripheral to the economy of Jamaica. If an opportunity ever presented itself for Jamaica to restore the confidence of the smaller West Indian territories after its decision to withdraw from the Federation, this was it. Bananas account for less than 7 per cent of Jamaica's total exports. But over 70% of Windwards' exports are derived from bananas. (In St. Lucia alone, the share is now about 85%). Concessions to the Windwards would hardly affect Jamaica's export earnings and would perhaps increase revenue to the grower, through higher prices. It would be a demonstration of regional awareness on the part of Jamaica and a show of concern for the less developed smaller territories—all at no monetary cost. Instead, the totally irrelevant argument of a traditional place in the market was the main policy consideration.

It really should not be surprising that the Jamaica Government has shown no concern with the development problems of the "less advanced" West Indian islands, with which it was once constitutionally associated. After all, even inside Jamaica itself successive administrations have shown little real concern with closing the income and status gaps existing within the country. And, as the saying goes, charity begins at home! Yet the same governments have consistently exhorted the more advanced countries to help close the gap between rich and poor countries, classifying themselves conveniently in the latter group in order to obtain concessions and handouts. Jamaica makes the case to the United States, for example, that the latter should diversify away from light manufacturing, such as textiles in favour of countries like Jamaica. What then of Jamaica's position vis-a-vis the Windward Islands?

SHROVE TUESDAY

BY F. W. DOWERS

"Gobels" lay sprawled on his back under the gallery where he had slept all night. He was snoring loudly still fast asleep although it was 5.30 that Tuesday morning. Next to him his con-

frere, 'Fathead', stirred restlessly, then suddenly sat bolt upright. He stared bleary-eyed at the large roach which stood perched on Gobels' lower lip and was gazing awestruck into the cavern which Gobels called a mouth.

Fathead tried to shoo the roach away, but it remained peering into Gobels' mouth as if petrified by the deep guttural roars which he emitted with every breath.

"Wake up Gobels, cockroach ah fally yo!" Fathead shouted to Gobels who groaned and rolled over to his side without awakening. Fathead shook him to consciousness, then explained to him that it was time for them to make preparations for the Carnival. Gobels pulled himself into a sitting position reluctantly. From his side pocket he produced a penny loaf and ate it ravenously. "Yo get the ting?" he enquired of Fathead. "No" replied Fathead, when ah did pass by Miss Lucy to teef it she did done carry it inside to use las night." "So way we gwine get yo headpiece from chief?" asked Gobels roughly. "Well ley we use ah ole bowl instead of teefing the ole lady only chamber pot nuh," suggested Fathead feebly. "Awright" agreed Gobels somewhat disappointed, "Go dung by the fish bay and teef one quick, I gwine go teef the charcoal and crocus bags." Fathead hurried off in the direction of the fishmarket.

By six o'clock that morning, the bands were already out on the streets. It was carnival Tuesday and the entire day would be dedicated to revelry, but between the mirth and jollification, there were many like Gobels and Fathead who hoped to make some money that day. There is no mask so cheap yet so profit-yielding as the "Bruise-ee-back", and that was exactly what they intended to play.

The bands were out early because a prize was offered to the first band arriving at the savannah, and so, the bands which considered themselves least likely to win in the competition later, vied with each other for the punctuality prize.

When Fathead reached the vicinity of the fishmarket, he saw a band approaching. There were already several fishermen and fishmongers present there. He patrolled the stalls till he saw a bowl which he estimated should fit his enormous head. It was a large enameled utensil with several spawls in the bottom. It had the usual patterns painted on by the makers in Hong Kong. A thin, tall flat-nosed fishwoman was using the bowl to dip chi-chiee from an oil tin to pour into a bucket. She eyed Fathead suspiciously as he edged close to her. Fathead pretended not to be noticing her, and made some movements with his hips in time with the distant music. Outside the street, a writhing mass of humanity edged slowly up the block. The tune pans played the latest calypso:

"All day all night Mary Ann,

Down by the seaside sifting sand,
Mary Ann on the bayside sifting sand,
She daughter in the rumshop fire one."

The writhing mass shouted the words almost drowning the heavy back-ground music provided by

the bass pans. As the band came alongside the fish-market, the fishwoman, overcome by the rhythm, stopped baling the chi-chiee and rested down the bowl. She began to 'la la' the tune.

"La la la la la-la-la

La la la la la help! Thieff!" she sung, then shouted. Fathead had grabbed the bowl and darted outside. He dug himself deep into the mass of humanity and began to twist himself with vigour. Perhaps no one heard, but certainly no one heeded the cries of the fish-monger.

By 8.00 o'clock, all was ready. Fathead, with head clean shaven and the bowl fitting snugly on his skull, was dressed in a crocus bag with head and arm holes only, over his underwear. His face and limbs were black and shiny from the application of charcoal dust and coconut oil which Gobels had put on. Around his eyes was a thick layer of paste made from oval blue and water. Over his left shoulder he held a crocus bag stuffed with dried banana leaves, but his right hand was left free for begging. Gobels' face and hands were blackened too, but his dress was different. He wore a tattered white shirt and an old pair of trousers which once formed part of a policeman's uniform. Around his throat dangled an enormous moth-eaten red tie. Under his left arm he held a huge dummy of a law book, and in his right hand was a long wooden club. Gobels fished in his seat pocket for the quart of strong rum he had there. He swallowed two mouthfuls then coughed and cursed as the hot liquor stung his palate. He handed the bottle to fathead who remarked "Yo dun arl, Yo na left nun." Fathead held the bottle up to the light to see the contents. Dissatisfied with what was left, he sucked his teeth, then drained the bottle empty and threw it away. He now adjusted the bowl on his head with his free hand.

"Yo ready?" asked Gobels gruffly. "Eh heh" replied Fathead "Ley we go." Gobels swung the club and struck the bag which Fathead held over his shoulder. "Sound good," he remarked. "Sound good wha, is me back sound so," moaned Fathead. Fathead ran from the beach where they had been dressing and headed up the street. Gobels waddled painfully behind him, being handicapped by the enormous 'bernia' which he had stuffed into his trouser front.

At the first street corner, Gobels spied the first likely victim. "She!" he shouted to Fathead who made a beeline for the woman standing on the corner with a baby in her arms and two other children holding on to her skirt. Persons of this sort, were the likeliest victims since they could not make good their escape being encumbered with children. The children too, were often scared stiff of the men with the blackened faces and the mothers would handout money quickly to rid the children of their fears.

Fathead approached the woman with right arm outstretched a begging. In a soft false voice tinged with distress and urgency he cajoled her to assist

CALYPSO DANCERS

BY E. Mc G. 'SHAKE' KEANE.

You should have seen them
dancing the Calypso,—

the whirling
strutting
sidling
shuffling
jumping
twisting
tripping
turning
leaping
crossing
capering
crashing Calypso!
Now with a whirl and a toss and turn
and a tumbling;
Calypso!
Now with a slipping and a shouting and a sliding,
Ecstasy!
And then with a mock-slow
sinuous winding,
tortuous rhythm translated into body.

To see them is to see the wind
as ocean sees it,
frenzied
To touch th m
is to touch the ocean
horizon-like, ever and never.
To join them is to let the senses perish
or swelter in a hot coagulation
of joy and drunken stupor,
to lose all consciousness of having self or sinew—
headless,
armless,
bosomless,—breathless—
retaining only
a vague, yet wildly burning
Sense of Rhythm.

Music is fire,
and rhythm is the smoke
that leaps from it,
wetting the eyes,
drugging the veins,
threading a delicate poison
in, through, between the rapid folds
of mind, like—in a grey noon—
beyond the mist, round a mass of brain-cloud
coiled—
a skein of lighting. but hotter—
a web of warm pulsation
Sensuous Calypso!

Look at their faces,
each a sweating mask,
a frozen crescendo of passion.
Look at their eyes,—
Can you read your way into a teardrop?

Heaven!
There are mirrors of emotion fretting the
the quivering lids
A smile snakes its way
round and round
their mouths,
loading the flesh with ripples,
ripples, ripples,
ripples every where; from the greasy chasms
on their foreheads
to the hairy palisades
drawn up about their eyes, protecting
prism beyond prism,
each gushing a spectrum of radiating madness

Music is a demon,
and rhythm is the spell
that sits upon his eye
and looks
a happy frenzy into mortal bones —
Maddening Calypso!

Look at their hands —
shoving
twisting
striking
clutching hands.
Look at their bodies,
lurching closer . . . closer . . .
then dissolving, each —
spiral after spiral —
into each; and then
resolving themselves into a twain
convulsive —
lurching farther — farther . . .

These are not men and women, entities
divorced, diverse, or free.
These are one rolling
rollicking
weaving, winding,
sweating, shouting
expression
of a passion universal,
urged, quickened and controlled
by an insistent blast
of wild resistless rhythm.

Music has form and colour,
Rhythm has force —
Music is a river,
men are the strengthless stones
swept on and on
Music is a wave,
men are the bubbly foam
rising and falling through infinitudes of cadence.
Music is a call, men are the echo.
Music is a whip,
and men are slaves
groaning in a spasm of vibrant toil.
Dynamic Calypso!

They cannot stop,
These dancers, until it stops,
until it has expressed the final drop of awakened
passion . . .

Men say the earth is a vital graveyard
of its own history,
that every fold of rock
teems
with imprisoned residues of an exhausted age,
so is music —
so is the music of the Calypso —
centuries of warm compulsion
spinning a woof of fire —
screaming, wriggling, whirling, flexing fire —
around the hot commotion
of dancing feet;
welling up
in crazy crescendos
through crevices of maddening sound, —
pulsating aeons instantly unwombed,
charred passions, fossil emotions
cast up in
rhythmic spurts of undulating dance...

It will not stop,
They cannot stop.
Forever
you shall see them dancing
The Calypso.

him in paying the fine of ten pounds which was imposed on him, and which he must pay or go to prison. The woman ignored him, but the two older children overcome with fear, hid themselves behind their mother. Fathead saw their fear immediately, and directed his attention to them entirely now. By this time, Gobels had come on the scene. With affected feebleness, he removed a lenseless old spectacle from his frayed shirt pocket and placed them low on his big nose. He now opened the dummy book, read a charge of larceny of two coconuts from some fictitious person against Fathead, found him guilty, convicted and fined him ten pounds payable immediately or in default he must serve one month hard labour. While Fathead continued to harass the two children with his "Poor me!" "Oh Gard!" "Poor me!", Gobels closed the book removed and replaced the spectacles, then dealt the bag a hefty whack saying: "Ten pung! Fine um!" He tapped the bowl on Fathead's skull to add to the torture. The bowl began to shed flakes of enamel with a creaking sound. "Whack," Gobels struck the bag again, "Fine um!" The woman fished in her bosom for her change purse. She took out one of the two five cents pieces she had and held it out to Fathead. Gobels hand snapped across grabbing the coin from her fingers. Fathead glared at him through the rings of oval blue around his eyes and ran on up the street.

A good distance from the corner Fathead stopped and waited for Gobels. "Wha happen now?" queried Gobels impatiently as he dragged up to Fathead. "Yo nacking the bag too hard, yo nearly buss me back jus now," complained Fathead sorrowfully. "Shut up and gwarn" commanded Gobels. Fathead obeyed. On the main street

where all the bands passed, the mothers and children congregated to see them, and it was here that Gobels and company concentrated most.

When the competitors were finished at the savannah, the bands paraded the streets. The victorious celebrating their victory the losers just playing mask. Hundreds of revellers followed the bands wiggling to the steel band music and shouting the chorus. The steel bands and string bands played the top hits of the current year and those of yester-year too. Tunes like the famous "Dorothy went and bathe" or the ever popular "Tina why-aye yah", could be heard intermingling with the more modern Sparrow compositions. Men, incapable drunk, blocked drains, or stood retching on the side walks. Children screamed when approached by the ubiquitous 'monkey-band' or the furious "wild indian" speaking an unknown language. Amidst this melee, Gobels and Fathead plied their scheming trade, picking out gullible victims with uncanny precision.

By 5 30 p.m., the tunes played by the bands began to diminish. As the setting sun glows on every evening of Shrove Tuesday, there is only one tune which has survived the decades, and is capable of replenishing the energy of the now languid reveller, and so, at this time, the bands all turn to it one after the other. So it was, when Gobels heard the first band playing the tune:

"When yo drink yo rum an yo tumble down,
We dont Kay,
Is ah carnival an ah Bakka nal,
We dont Kay,"

he knew it was time for them to call it a day. Perhaps it was the liquor, or perhaps it was the gratifying feel of the dozens of coins which now weighed down his pockets which egged Gobels on to tackle the tourist he saw standing by the four-poles. He knew he was tired and he was aware that the liquor he had been sneaking off to drink

when Fathead ran too far in front, was now taking effect on him.

Although he had already agreed with Fathead that they should return to the beach to count up and share the spoils, the sight of the tourist looking in his estimation, ripe for the picking, caused him to shout to Fathead: "Up with the bag!" Fathead obeyed involuntarily, then turned around enquiringly to him. Gobels pointed out the tourist standing a few yards away, and Fathead hurried off obediently. He hoarsely went through the usual "Poor me, Ten Pounds!" "Oh Gard!" The tourist regarded him disdainfully but he persisted. Gobels in the back ground further encumbered with the weight of the spoils, felt he should put some further effort to impress this customer. When he reached the scene, he read the usual charge without even consulting the book, he found the prisoner guilty, and laid the accustomed fine. The tourist remained unmoved. He dealt the bag a hefty blow with the usual "Ten pound Fine um!" — she still did not consult her wallet.

To this day, Gobels is still unable to explain whether he was too drunk to notice, or whether it was his eagerness to impress the tourist which caused the mistake, but it was not until Fathead lay unconscious and bleeding at his feet, did he notice that he was not still wearing the old bowl on his head, and so the blow he dealt him with the club had come into contact with Fathead's naked skull. Fathead on the other hand reached the hospital in a semi-conscious condition. Vaguely, he remembered the people crowding around, vaguely he remembered being put into a car, and hazily he remembered the bands playing and the people singing "Yo drink yo rum and yo tumble down, We dont kay." Positively, he knew he had drunk no rum, definitely he had tumbled down, but regrettably he *did* care.